

**business and industrial coordinating council**

46 BRANFORD PLACE • NEWARK, NEW JERSEY 07102 • AREA CODE 201 822-0272

ROLAND E. STEWART, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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Executive Director

A number of reports from relatives and friends of inmates at Trenton State Prison indicate the continued existence of a tinderbox atmosphere at the maximum security prison. Roland E. Stewart, Director of the Business & Industrial Coordinating Council and one of the community persons present at the Thanksgiving rebellion at Rahway, stated a number of repressive measures are being increased. Relatives have reported harassment including shock treatments given prisoners rendering them insensible, guards writing up inmate actions for alleged infractions, no clear specific rules of behavior defined, cruel and unusual punishments, prisoner weight loss due to insufficient food and non-nutritive diets, unsanitary kitchen conditions, and outright brutality.

Stewart indicates he receives four to six phone calls a week from relatives who visit inmates, plus numerous letters detailing alleged complaints. The stabbing of a guard in the mess hall is only one factor in the reaction of stepped-up repressive measures at Trenton. Prisoners allege there is nothing available on the outside not readily available inside for a price. Not only do prisoners disappear after some alleged incident, but the isolated dungeon referred to as the "hole" is a repository for those inmates who rebel against being treated like scum. One inmate was placed in the hole for defending himself from being molested sexually. Another relative of an inmate indicted for allegedly being part of the Rahway

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Rebellion, wanted to know whether this indictment would delay his release scheduled for early 1973. Stewart indicated he has forwarded several inmate complaints from other institutions to State Defender, Stanley Van Ness and ACLU's Lennox Hines.

Ex-inmates with an apparent desire to seek rehabilitation and educational services before release, relate how correspondence to agencies on the outside is either destroyed or never released to the agency in question. It took one inmate 3 years to establish a link with Vocational Rehabilitation. Three months after his release, his application is still pending. There was also some racial anger expressed inside Rahway Prison over Anthony Imperiale's visit, while non-white legislators and community persons were denied entrance.

Stewart lauded the efforts of those groups currently raising the issue of penal reform along with Governor Cahill's efforts. Stewart mentioned, BIPA, Joint Coalition for Penal Reform, United Organizations Association, ACLU and Alliance For a Safer New Jersey, as those in the forefront.

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